CLAIMS

What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent of the United States is:

1. A method of processing a nut, comprising:
forming cracks in the nut by exposing the nut to a low temperature; and
separating the nut into a plurality of nut fragments.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the exposing the nut to the low temperature comprises exposing the nut to a cryogen.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein the cryogen comprises liquid nitrogen.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the exposing the nut to the low temperature comprises immersing the nut in the cryogen.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the exposing the nut to the low temperature comprises spraying the nut with the cryogen.

6. The method of claim 2, wherein the exposing the nut to the low temperature comprises placing the nut in a container and exposing the container to the cryogen.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the exposing the container to the cryogen comprises immersing the container in the cryogen.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the separating the nut into the plurality of nut fragments comprises agitating the nut to separate the nut fragments along the cracks formed by exposing the nut to the low temperature.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein the separating the nut into the plurality of nut fragments comprises blowing air onto the cracked nut to separate

the nut fragments along the cracks formed by exposing the nut to the low temperature.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

forming cracks in a plurality of the nut fragments by exposing the nut fragments to a low temperature; and separating each nut fragment in the plurality of nut fragments into a plurality of smaller nut fragments.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

removing the skin from the nut after forming cracks in a plurality of the nut fragments by exposing the nut fragments to the low temperature.

12. A plurality of nut fragments formed by the method of claim 1.

13. Small nut fragments characterized in that raw material nuts are quenched to form cracks in the raw material nuts and the cracked raw material nuts are separated along the cracks to form nut fragments.

14. Small nut fragments characterized in that raw material nuts are quenched using an extremely low temperature liquefied gas to form cracks in the raw material nuts and the cracked raw material nuts are crumbled along the cracks to form small fragments.

15. Small nut fragments characterized in that raw material nuts are quenched using liquid nitrogen to form cracks in the raw material nuts and the cracked raw material nuts are crumbled along the cracks to form small fragments.

16. The small nut fragments described in any of claims 13 through 15, characterized in that when the cracked raw material nuts are shaken, they are crumbled along the cracks to form small fragments.

17. The small nut fragments described in any of Claims 13 through 15, characterized in that when compressed air is blown on e cracked raw material nuts, they are crumbled along the cracks to form small fragments.

18. The small nut fragments described in any of Claims 13 through 15, characterized in that when the cracked raw material nuts are agitated, rubbed, kneaded or loosened by hand or using an equivalent tool, they are crumbled along the cracks to form small fragments.

19. The small nut fragments described in any of Claims 13 through 15, characterized in that the small nut fragments crumbled along the cracks are small fragments obtained by repeating the cracking by quenching and crumbling along the cracks.

20. The small nut fragments described in any of Claims 13 through 15, characterized in that raw material nuts are quenched to form cracks in the raw material nuts and the cracked raw material nuts are crumbled along the cracks to form small fragments, while the astringent skin of the nuts is peeled off at the same time.